



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Region 3 Citizens' Advisory Committee FWP Region 3 Office—Bozeman March 31, 2011

CAC Attendees: Cyndy Andrus, Rick Arnold, Barb Cestero, Joe Cohenour, Robin Cunningham, David Gibson, Tom Henderson, Ross Lingle, Bill Mealer, LeRoy Mehring, Tom Milesnick, Sam Samson

CAC Members Absent: Gene Budeski, Richard Grady, Mike Myer, Ken Sinay

FWP Staff present: Pat Flowers, Mel Frost, Jerry Walker, Justin Gibson, Travis Horton, Cheryl Morris, Betsy Gordon, and Neil Anderson

Guests: Richard Lessner

Greetings, Introductions, roundtable, public comment:

Pat introduced Travis Horton, new fisheries manager. Bruce Rich is now Chief of Fisheries in Helena. Pat also introduced Justin Gibson, warden in the Boulder-Whitehall area.

Tom Henderson: Concern about Highland Mine on Continental Divide between Butte and Whitehall—use of old Fish Creek Road and cutthroat population.

David Gibson: Would like to hear more expansion on legislative update concerning restricting the scope of operations and authority of FWP. Is this real or imagined?

Robin Cunningham: Receive call from three members concerned with access on Yellowstone River. FAS improvement equipment is still left there. Will it be gone by April? (Pat: Yes). At Point of Rocks FAS, satisfied with improvements, but old one is going to be blocked off. Hopes we don't give up access. Place large boulders so people can still walk-in, but prevent vehicle access. Tom Miner Bridge: People use that stretch—block road and install real ramp if money permits.

Rick Arnold: Would like to update CAC on Respect Your Rivers campaign. Also want to know how Future Fisheries program is going to pan out.

Sam Samson: The effects of I-161 are already being seen, there is already a surplus due to higher cost. When will the results from brucellosis study be ready? Status of bill regarding HD 380 Elkhorn's tags that would set certain number of minimum tags—did that die? (Pat: yes). Want more information.

Leroy Mehring: At Clark Canyon, Fisheries waits two years to make changes. Not happy with that. The Jefferson River brown trout; Jefferson has restoration on streams for spawning rainbows. 3 to 1 rainbows to brown...return all rainbows to river. Take off the limits on rainbows at this time. Regarding the issue with the mine that Tom Henderson raised, I agree with Tom that FWP should put some pressure on. This is a safety issue as well as maintenance issue.

Tom Milesnick: When ranchers are calving they're having trouble with sportsmen in with the cows. There has been a bad attitude with sportsmen in the past. This year is a complete turnaround—sportsmen have been cooperative, giving us room, etc. People coming on property, down about four rod days. Our anglers are catching browns. There are problems in valley with white-tailed deer. We have about 400 on property right now. Hunters only killed 4 off our place during the regular season. Now there are wall-to-wall deer.

Ross Lingle: My interest is in legislative update and relationship between legislature and FWP.

Pat Flowers: FWP Updates; Dan Vermillion and Willie Doll's FWP Commission terms expired. Dan Vermillion was re-appointed, Willie Doll was not. New appointee for District 4 is Rusty Stafne. He is currently the chairman of Fort Peck Tribal Commission.

FWP reorganized the department two years ago to separate Parks from the Fish and Wildlife Divisions. My responsibility is still to supervise the region, except Parks Division employees. Jerry Walker is the supervisor for the region's Parks Division. We are now going through another transition where Fishing Access Sites and River Recreation will move to Fisheries. The Parks Division's only focus now is parks. The FAS program has always been an outlier. It didn't quite fit into Parks or Fisheries. Previously, Fisheries handled the acquisition of new FAS locations and Parks handled management and maintenance. Parks is trying to prioritize its focus on parks.

Jerry Walker: Funding was one big factor. Parks funding sources differ from FAS funding (which is from license sales). This separation prevents the mixing of funds. License account dollars backed by Federal funds are not legal to use to fund Parks. We are working to have this in place by July 1. The first detail was to separate split FTEs in each position with shared funding. The FAS Manager will shift to Fisheries. The River Recreation Manager will also shift to Fisheries. The maintenance supervisor will stay with Parks, but the maintenance worker will shift to Fisheries. All seasonal employees will stay with their current program. We will consolidate budgets and share and divide equipment. We have a fleet of heavy equipment and will share much of the equipment for the time being. There are more details to work out.

Pat: Travis Horton will supervise the River Recreation and FAS Managers. Submission of plan for reorganization (budget) has gone smoothly statewide, but especially in Region 3.

Jerry: We are implementing a new reservation system—March 30 was the first day. Only state park campgrounds are in the system. We received 720 reservations on the first day—279 through the internet and the remainder through the call center. Big Arm got 221; Tongue got 274; \$51,800 in revenue. There were some glitches—the system crashed until 9:30 a.m. The system is through ReserveAmerica. The operators and staff commented about the good manners and politeness of Montanans.

Jerry: Logan FAS development EA went out for public comment and proposed: boat ramp, facilities, etc. We received four comments from public. Of the four comments, three were for and one opposed. We will release a decision notice in May. Site location: FWP property is behind water tower and downstream. One half of the property was donated to the American Legion and the other half donated to FWP by a well-known philanthropist. Two issues to resolve: water control dike, upstream side of American Legion portion and working together to make all parcels good for public use. American Legion wants a Veterans' memorial on site. Down the road we will probably maintain the entire parcel, which is about one acre.

Pat: The regional Wildlife Manager position is vacant with Kurt Alt's retirement. We've been hosting a series of Acting Wildlife Managers. A. Dood, Howard Burt, and Neil Anderson will serve as acting managers. Hoping to get that filled when we know the budget status.

Wolf update: Factsheet handed out on the Wolf Settlement including Montana & Idaho. Wolves will be managed by states with management plans. FWP proposed a season last year and will propose one this year.

Pat: Bison management—the IBMP managers have agreed to some changes in the Gardiner Basin. A bison guard has been installed on Highway 89 at the south end of Yankee Jim Canyon and the speed limit is reduced to 35mph there. Some fencing will be installed provided we're granted a special use permit from the U.S. Forest Service. Tolerance boundary stops at Yankee Jim Canyon. North of Yankee Jim Canyon is a zone where bison will be lethally removed.

Pat: Highlighted a few bills in the 2011 Montana legislative session.

Neil Anderson: Presentation on elk brucellosis study in Greater Yellowstone area.

CAC Caucus

Natural Resource Damage Program

Tom Henderson: Referring to a point I brought up last meeting—Natural Resource Damage program. How are projects selected for that program? Concerned that Butte is sitting on cesspool that will leach into Silver Bow Creek and there could be fish killed all the way to Missoula. There is no money to clean it up. Nice having places like Spotted Dog, etc., but that's not remediating the problems that are there and will cause problems down the road.

Respect your Rivers

Rick Arnold: After two years, we are trying to refocus program and decide which direction to go. RYR has primarily focused on fishing and river use. We have a list of concerns as subcommittee. Most everyone has seen what our program is and what our focus is. We currently have four video PSAs bringing awareness to four issues—boat ramp etiquette, aquatic nuisance species, fishing etiquette, and recreational use etiquette. We met with Brickhouse Creative to come up with some new ideas and met as a subcommittee to make some decisions about new direction. Discussion:

- It usually costs money to raise public awareness
- When you are raising money you need to show results to donors. How do we do that?
- Who is our target audience—fishermen, kayakers, floaters, hunters, party people?
- We need to raise more money and we have limited fundraising capability.
- Our focus has been on fishermen and river use.

- We've used paid PSAs on southwest Montana television stations. Get PSAs back on TV in June?
- There are different tools for different user groups—for example, three different sub-groups of fisherman: local, out-of-area, and extreme.
- Sell more t-shirts, bumper stickers
- Potential new products with RYR info: hats, Simms bottle openers (ask Simms to print RYR logo on back), beverage cozy
- Social media: Facebook, Twitter, website (should look into website counter)—need person with social media experience to create and constantly maintain.
- Granny Trout costume—rented previously. Would like to replicate costume if no copyright issues. Get Granny into schools, events, meetings, etc.
- We've set a goal of trying to raise \$10K. We have \$900 left in account.
- Produce more videos? Stream access: get message about legal vs. not legal.
- Trout Unlimited min-grants program—a chapter can sponsor a mini-grant.
- Full-page ad in Montana Fishing Regulations?
- RYR messages on fishing license holders?
- Montana outdoor radio show?
- Outdoor Channel? Check for reduced rate for unused time slots.
- Signs on Fishing Access Site restrooms?
- Obvious Advertising signs in restrooms throughout area?
(<http://www.obviousads.com/>)
- Need campaign plan, timeline, assignments

Group not sure it's effective use of funds to produce more video PSAs now when the existing four haven't gotten maximum play in the region. Group agreed to keep using the four existing PSAs and not produce new ones right now.

Does group want to pursue own fish costume?

Tom M: I move if less than \$500

Joe: second

Ayes: 11; Nays: 0

Other decisions deferred to subcommittee (bumper stickers, t-shirts, etc.)

Travis: About a month and a half ago, Dillon fisheries biologist Matt Jaeger presented results of a data analysis he conducted on Clark Canyon Fish stocking success and factors affecting the success of the stocks. Eagle Lake strain rainbow trout have been used over the past 15 years. Hatchery stocking success appears to be closely tied to reservoir elevation. When water levels are low, stocking success is low; when water levels are high, success is better. The series of drought years has taken its toll on the rainbow trout population, but reservoir conditions have improved significantly in the past few years. The FWP Commission received a request to stock Arlee trout into Clark Canyon Reservoir. Conclusions of Matt's analysis were not to change the stocking practices at this point, given that we will have three years in a row of good reservoir elevations. The Eagle Lake rainbow trout being stocked now will produce good fishing even if we enter another dry period (due to their longevity). FWP will consider using Arlee when we enter back into a dry cycle with low reservoir levels. Matt is also working with Ennis hatchery to delay stocking as late as possible (shooting for July 1 in the future), such that the newly stocked fish will have abundant feed available. Finally, Matt has worked with the fish health committee

and hatchery folks to collect eggs from hatchery fish that have survived in Clark Canyon Reservoir and returned to the Red Rock River to spawn. These fish have demonstrated that they are well suited for Clark Canyon Reservoir. If all goes well, the first gametes will be collected during the spring of 2012. Ennis National Fish hatchery is also working on improving the genetic makeup of their brood population by revisiting the original Eagle Lake source.

The June meeting was rescheduled to July 7, 2011 in Bozeman at the FWP Regional Office.

Pat: I'd like to address attendance. First, we recognize LeRoy Mehring and Dave Gibson for perfect attendance. And there are some others who've only missed one meeting in some cases out of 12 meetings. However, there are others who have missed half or more. Many people applied to be on this committee—this as an opportunity. I'm instituting a new policy that if you miss two meetings in a 12 month period then you will be replaced. To be fair to those who are not here tonight and because we've rescheduled the second quarter meeting tonight, it will not go into effect until the third quarter meeting (September).

Rick: Will we still plan a meeting with Region 2?

Pat. That could still work. I'll talk with my counterpart.

Bill Mealer: We've never talked about threatened species in our area and we should do that. In Montana, 25% of big horn sheep were lost last year.

Pat: We have talked about this before. The biologist who wrote bighorn sheep plan is a Region 3 biologist out of Townsend, Tom Carlsen. We could invite him to talk to us.

Pat. Good topic. Other issues?

Sam Samson: How about HD380?

Pat: I'll follow up on that.

Adjourned.